She can also remain in her fiancé's family and there be taken in marriage by one of his kinsmen. If everything favors the continuation of the union, the new husband-to-be pays the bride price, but he need not repeat the engagement payments, which retain their validity. If he belongs to a distant branch of the family, however, the kin of the deceased will not want to give up their property, and the new fiancé himself will have to acquit himself of all the bride-price obligations, beginning with the ikulí.

Sometimes the dying man, in making his last requests, enjoins his family to maintain the alliance. In that case one of his kinsman must marry the woman. If later on a breakup becomes inevitable, the spouses separate. For that matter, if the woman lacks the inclination to remarry in her fiancé's kin group, she will not be forced to do so.

This practice is based on the stipulation of Nkundó law that engaged persons have all the duties and privileges of married couples.

There is nothing among the Nkundó that resembles a levirate. Even in the case we cited of a last will, the obligation derives solely from the sacred nature of that will. [448]

Article IX

The Death of the Woman Before the Payment of the Bride Price

Two situations must be distinguished: 1) The woman dies during the engagement; 2) she dies before the bonkongo.

1. Before the walo

As has already been said, engaged persons enjoy all the duties and privileges of a married couple. If the girl dies the fiancé must fulfill all obligations toward the deceased and her family (transporting the corpse, sacrifices, nkumí). But his obligations do not end there.

Through the payment of the ndanga (and, in practice, already through the ikulí) he is considered responsible for any accident that might befall his fiancée in his home; and he has assumed the

This law requiring a most strict fidelity lasts until the end of the bokeka for the husband, but until the weaning of the child for the wife. It is especially strict for the period of seclusion (see below, Article III, 3).

The violation of the essential stipulation of this interdict (-fénda bokeka) results either in the death of the woman during pregnancy and especially during seclusion or in the death of the child later on. [477]

A. If the woman dies during this period, the suspicion is placed a priori on her husband. The Nkundó say abfénda wălf, "he has transgressed against his wife." Unless he can prove his innocence through public actions, the judgment of a magician, or autopsy[sic].

If the woman has been the victim of a seducer, he is held responsible and must pay a large indemnity equivalent to the bride price that was paid for the deceased. If no other man is involved, the affair has no consequences.

In the past the combined autopsy and Caesarian section was always performed. It had a dual purpose: to remove the child and to examine the mother. If the operation revealed the existence of a "stomach" (likundó), the deceased was of a noxious (lilóka) nature or constitution and therefore caused the death of her child. If the child remained alive, it proved that he was of a magically superior nature and was able to resist the natural evil spells of his mother, which thus turned against their unwitting author. (1)

1. The Nkundó believe that only animals have a "stomach" (likundó). If a human being has one, that is, if his viscera are large, curved, in compartments, in a word, abnormal, that person is an evildoer. He commits evil acts voluntarily or, most frequently, unknowingly. Some men with a likundó can be recognized by the fact that they eat their nails, hair, etc. The Nkundó must certainly have observed relationships between this habit and a deformity of the stomach.

7:Brown M-5 (ca. 1940) 1944 FO32 Mongo FO32
Ntomba

must go to the *mankele* for their fight, this being the location of the houses belonging to the sons of the *nkumu*. The penalty for breaking this law is a fine, and if no fine were forthcoming hanging used to be the alternative. If a quarrel arises elsewhere and one party wishes to avoid fighting, he may retire to the *nsapo* and thus be safe. No trees in the *nsapo* may be climbed. There are, however, privileged classes exempt from all such rules, and these embrace a good many people. Thus, the mother of twins, twins, Batwa, *mawi*, and all members of the *mulemba* and *ekopo* are exempt from the laws of the *nsapo*. If any of these commit acts which are illegal for those coming under the law, they are not held guilty, but their actions will not be condoned; they will be considered breaches of good conduct, and will be dealt with informally; the parties will be quietly reprimanded, and adjured to observe the proprieties of conduct. For outsiders breaking the laws of the *nsapo*, what corresponds to a warrant is necessary. It is necessary to catch the culprit in the act and hale him before the *nkumu*. The *nkumu* himself cannot do this, nor can any of the *ekopo*; it must be done by one of the *mulemba*, and so if the *nkumu* sees someone infringing the law he will try to get one of the *mulemba* on the spot in a hurry in order to catch the offender.

In war,[1] it is the *mulemi o ele* who is most active in preparations, but the *nkumu* will accompany his party to battle, keeping well in the rear, and surrounded by good fighters. He does not wear his *mankole* but puts on the informal hat. If an *nkumu* were captured, he would never be tortured or killed as were other prisoners, unless he specifically sought such a fate. He could be ransomed, and his captors would beseech him to let his people ransom him, but in many cases an *nkumu* would invite death rather than endure the shame of being yielded up as a prisoner of war.

An *nkumu* is always addressed by a double clap of the hands, and will not reply to anyone rude enough to speak to him first. In answer to the clap he replies with a word of wisdom expressed in an aphorism or proverb. Such a reply, however, is common to all elders, who have their favourite aphorisms ready for any who pay them special honour. Anything the *nkumu* says must be answered not by the customary *ako boiko* (even so) which ordinary people use, but with the special word, *hingo*, which is reserved exclusively for replying to an *nkumu*, and means the same thing.

When the hour of death approaches, an *nkumu* is attended by his Batwa. It is a rule that he must not die a natural death, and near the end, while he is still conscious and can still speak, all 'free men' clear out and leave the Batwa pygmies to their task of tying the *nkumu* very tightly with the fibrous yam vines known as *mankidi*. Often this secure lashing in the sitting posture, known as *ilima*, is sufficient to finish the *nkumu* off, but sometimes the work is expedited by twisting his neck.[2] Then it is announced that he is dead, *nekilwa*, this being in contradistinction to the customary phrase *nokwa mokolo* used of the death of ordinary people. While the latter means

[1] Owing to the lack of tribal cohesion, warfare was not on any considerable scale. The method of warfare consisted in sending groups of young men to fight first, the elders only joining in when one side began to get the worst of the fray. Victors and vanquished in such fights were designated 'husband' and 'wife' respectively, and members of the one group were free to come and go in the villages of the other, and even to help themselves to food. In future wars 'husband' and 'wife' were supposed to combine against their common foes.

[2] Besides *nkumu*, elderly and rich men, fathers and mothers of twins, and twins are buried in the *ilima* or sitting posture, in contradistinction to the *nsongo* position which is the recumbent one used for ordinary people and slaves.

literally that the deceased has hanged the heart, the former is used of a tree which leans over and falls from a great cut at its base.

On the announcement of the death, an expert drummer drums out the news. There will be at least four drums of the type known as *lokuku*, and a *nsuyu*.[1] The four drums are called by the names, *Epanda*, having the 'biggest voice', that is a deep bass note, *Mongyo*, having a higher note, *Mongonda*, a high pitched note, and *Monkoto*, having a very high penetrating note. To these four drums others are added; if the *nkumu* himself did not possess sufficient, they would be borrowed from the surrounding villages, and their notes matched with those of the first three drums, being beaten with them in their turn. *Monkoto* is beaten simultaneously with *Epanda*, giving a rhythmic tattoo. When the news of the death has been sent out on *Epanda*, the funeral drumming commences, as follows:

Mongonda. Botiangana w'Amba lokolo,
Mongyo. Ntsala ikita, otongonoko,
Epanda. Tokund' ihenge mokom' o nyama,
Omboikeke mmenge,
Lobanga lolenda mondo,
Bikela bilenda lobola.
Nsuyu. Tohilake nkoi nkonge,
Tohilake nkoi nkonge, &c.

The English and the interpretation are as follows:

Mongonda. A scattering of Amba, the snail. (The mother of twins, always called Amba, here gives her name to the snail because of her prolific progeny, which, upon being introduced to the world, scatter, while the mother dies. So the death of the *nkumu* will cause a scattering of his many wives and children.)

Mongyo. Feathers fall; pick them up. (That is to say, for your arrow shafts, for if you don't, and come back later, the wind will have scattered them and you won't find them. So while the *nkumu* was alive it was the time for his children to learn his teachings so that when palavers came after his death they would be well acquainted with his wisdom and know how to settle them.)

Epanda. We are burying the *ihenge*, husband of animals, You have just eaten *mmenge*, The chin looks up at the ridge pole, The jaw bones look up at the sky. (The *ihenge* is an animal much prized for its fat meat; the *nkumu* always gets his share when it is killed, and the skin is made into carrying straps for infants, and into belts. Batwa are prohibited the use of it for any purpose. It is therefore fitting to liken the *nkumu* to the *ihenge*. *Mmenge* (sing. *lomenge*) is the equivalent of a snack. When a woman brings her cassava from the swamp where it has been soaking for several days, her husband may be too hungry to wait the long hours required to cook it, so to appease his hunger his wife takes a piece or two of the unprepared root, splits it in two, places salt between, wraps it in a *lokombe* leaf and roasts it in the hot ashes, where it is quickly cooked. So the *nkumu* just had time to eat a few *mmenge*; he didn't wait for the big cooking; his life was suddenly cut off.)

Nsuyu. Don't pull out the leopard's eyelashes. (That is, while he is alive; now he is dead one can disregard his power.)

[1] A *lokuku* is a slit gong made from a hollowed log. In two ways can produced by striking the two lips of the slit. A *nsuyu* is a hollowed log, open at one end, across which is stretched a vellum hide.